

**Draft  
Environmental Assessment  
for the  
NORTH SHORE  
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA  
PROPOSED WILDLIFE VIEWING AREA**

**May 2019**

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**North Shore Wildlife Management Area  
Proposed Wildlife Viewing Area  
Draft Environmental Assessment  
MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST**

**PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION**

**1. Type of proposed state action:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) owns and manages the 427-acre North Shore Wildlife Management Area (WMA) located in Flathead County, approximately seven miles southeast of Kalispell and just north of Flathead Lake. The WMA is a mix of cultivated grain fields, seasonally flooded grasslands, and wooded uplands. The property abuts the US Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) 1,887-acre Flathead Lake Waterfowl Production Area (WPA), and together they protect the lake's longest stretch of undeveloped shoreline and are part of the Audubon-designated Flathead Lake Important Bird Area (IBA). FWP proposes building a wildlife viewing area on the northwest corner of the WMA.

**2. Agency authority for the proposed action:**

Montana Code Annotated 23-2-101. Legislative findings - purpose. Montana is uniquely endowed with scenic landscapes and areas rich in recreational value. This outdoor heritage enriches the lives of citizens, attracts new residents and businesses to the state, and is of major significance to the expanding tourist industry. It is the purpose of this part to give authority to the department of fish, wildlife, and parks to plan and develop outdoor recreational resources in the state, which authority shall permit receiving and expending funds including federal grants for this purpose.

**3. Name of project:**

North Shore Wildlife Management Area Proposed Wildlife Viewing Area

**4. Project sponsor:**

Chris Hammond  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region 1  
490 North Meridian Road  
Kalispell, MT 59901

**5. Anticipated Schedule:**

Estimated public comment period: May 30 – June 13, 2019  
Estimated decision notice: June 17, 2019  
Estimated commencement date: After decision notice issued.  
Estimated completion date: Summer 2019  
Current status of project: (% complete): 0%

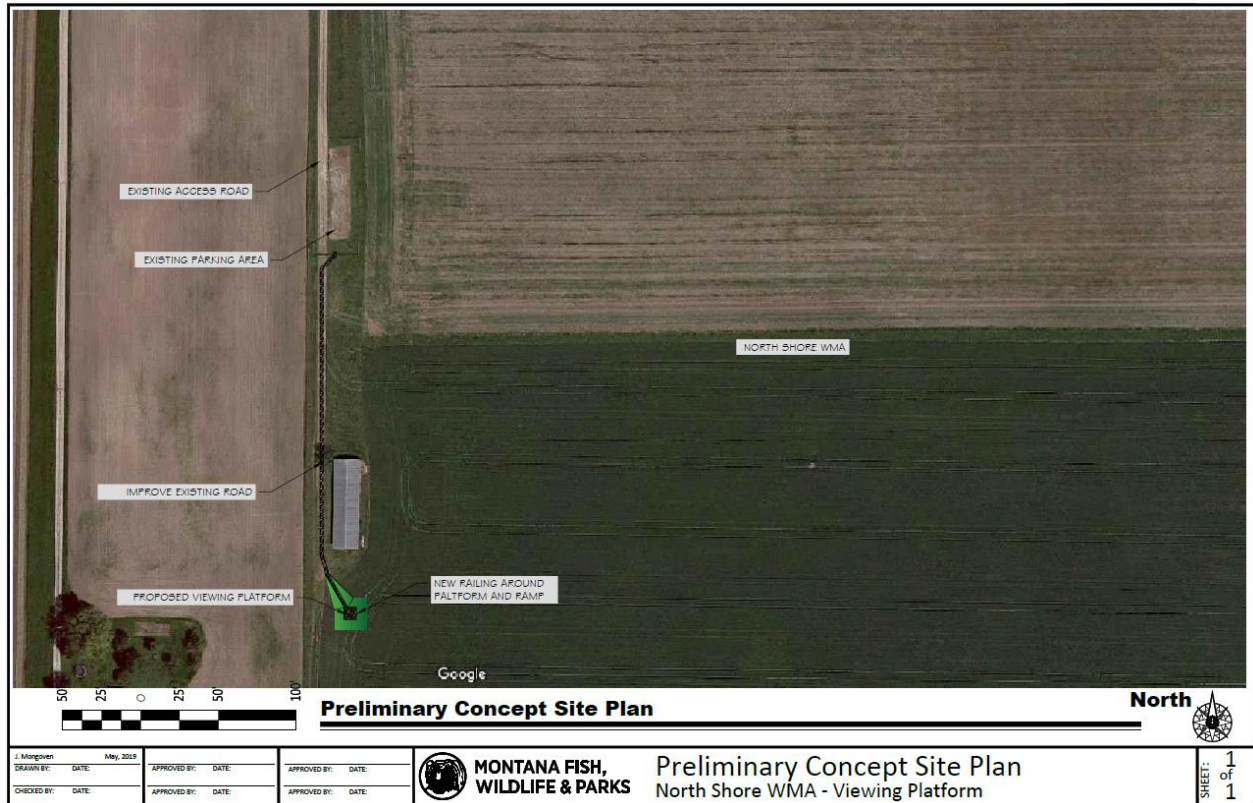
6. Location:  
The project area is located southeast of Kalispell off of Highway 82 in Flathead County. The land is located in Section 21, Township 27N, Range 20W. (Figures 1 through 3).



**Figure 1. General location of North Shore project area.**



**Figure 2. Close-up of the North Shore WMA with proposed wildlife viewing area location.**



**Figure 3. Location for the proposed wildlife viewing area.**

**7. Project size:**

	<u>Acres</u>		<u>Acres</u>
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	<u>0</u>
Residential	<u>0</u>		
Industrial	<u>0</u>	(e) Productive:	
(b) Open Space/	<u>0</u>	Irrigated cropland	<u>0</u>
Woodlands/Recreation		Dry cropland	<u>0.1 acre</u>
(c) Wetlands/Riparian	<u>0</u>	Forestry	<u>0</u>
Areas		Rangeland	<u>0</u>
		Other	<u>0</u>

**8. Permits, funding & overlapping jurisdiction:**

**(a) Permits:** No permits required.

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permits</u>
None	

**(b) Funding:**

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
FWP Nongame Check-off	\$ 7,000
Wildlife Mitigation Trust	<u>\$ 7,000</u>
Total	\$14,000

**(c) Other overlapping or additional jurisdictional responsibilities:**

<b><u>Agency Name</u></b>	<b><u>Type of Responsibility</u></b>
Flathead County Weed Control District	Weed Management Coordination
State Historic Preservation Office	Cultural Clearance

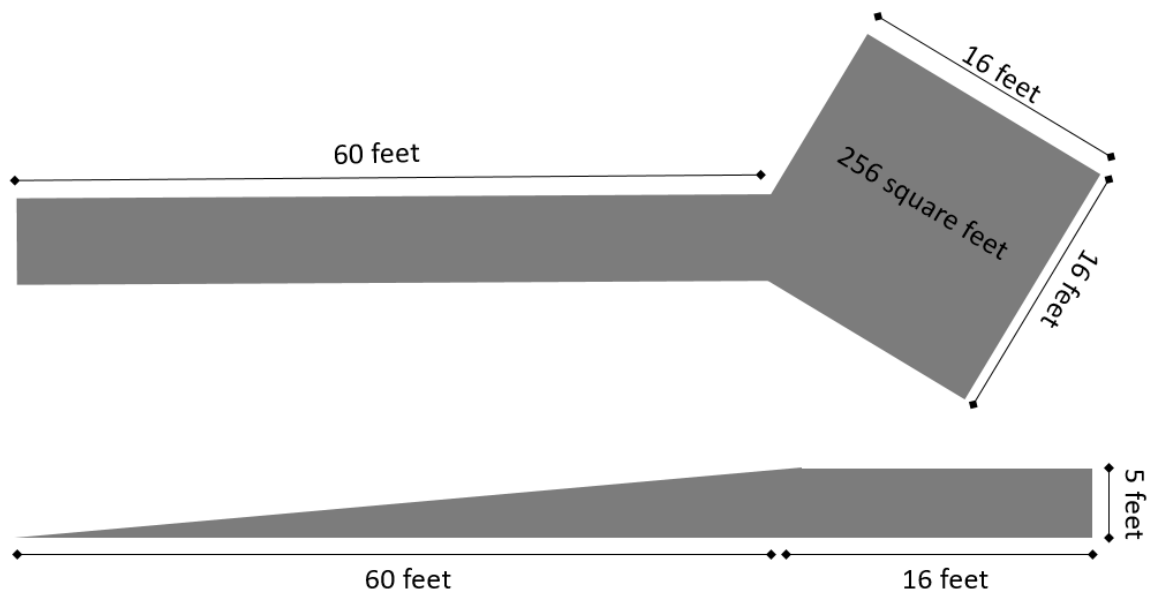
**9. Narrative summary of the proposed action:**

This project will create a public wildlife viewing area southeast of Kalispell. The wildlife viewing area would overlook the 427-acre North Shore WMA. The agricultural land of the WMA is managed for wildlife with leave grain left by contract farmers to provide for the energetic requirements of thousands of waterfowl that use the north shore of Flathead Lake as a stopover on their migration north. Over one hundred species of birds have been documented using the WMA including tens of thousands of waterfowl, shorebirds, and raptors. Other common wildlife species found near the project include white-tailed deer, badger, coyote, fox, skunk, muskrat, and a variety of small mammals.

Wildlife viewing days have not been documented but are likely to be exceptionally high due to the accessibility of the viewing area and its location within the Flathead Valley. The viewing area would provide safe access to an incredible wildlife viewing opportunity not currently available in this part of the valley, as well as provide an outdoor classroom for the local schools. This project meets a stated action in the FWP Vision and Guide: it will allow FWP to continue to foster interest and involvement in the resources we manage through public outreach and education so that people increasingly value these resources and the experiences they provide.

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) observation database and FWP databases found that the only plant or animal species listed as Threatened or Endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) observed near the proposed North Shore project area was the grizzly bear, which is also a species of concern. Other species of concern observed near the proposed project include black-necked stilt, black tern, bobolink, Brewer's sparrow, common loon, common tern, great blue heron, Lewis's woodpecker, peregrine falcon, trumpeter swan, varied thrush, white-faced ibis, little brown myotis, Columbian water-meal, straightbeak buttercup, and Howell's quillwort. The bald eagle is the only Special Status Species.

FWP proposes to create a small wildlife viewing area on our North Shore WMA. Constructing the wildlife viewing area will include the following actions: (1) improving a portion of the existing access road from the parking lot to the viewing platform, (2) potentially widening the parking area to provide space for a bus to turn around, (3) constructing a 5-ft high, 256 square foot viewing platform of compressed gravel with safety railing (Figure 4), and (4) building fences and planting shrubs to screen public activity at the viewing area from wildlife.



**Figure 4. Preliminary specs for the proposed wildlife viewing area.**

**10. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives:**

**Alternative A: No Action**

If no action were taken with the proposed project, FWP's ability to provide for a new and safe wildlife viewing opportunity would be lost and FWP would lose an opportunity to foster interest and involvement in the resources we manage. No changes would take place on the property.

**Alternative B: Proposed Action**

Under the proposed action, FWP would create a wildlife viewing area that meets the grade and dimensional standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The proposed action would help accommodate the increasing demands for safe and easily accessible wildlife viewing opportunities in the Flathead Valley and allow FWP to foster interest and involvement in the resources we manage.

**11. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:**

FWP would develop the final design and specifications for the proposed action. We will complete the work using agency staff and our partnership with Flathead Valley Community College's Heavy Equipment Operator students and staff.

## PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

### Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

#### A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X		No	1a.
c. Destruction, covering, or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition, or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				

- 1a. The proposed action would remove and replace soil with gravel material for walking paths, observation area, and potential expansion of the parking area. Impacts to existing soil patterns, structures, productivity, fertility, and instability beyond the footprint of platforms are not anticipated. Soil and geologic substructure would remain stable during and after the proposed work.

2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13c.)			X		Yes	2a.
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns, or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regulations? (Also see 2a.)		X				



- 2a. There may be minor impacts to air quality during construction and/or maintenance of the viewing area – exhaust from equipment and dust in the air. These impacts would be limited in duration – only during construction or times of maintenance. Dust can be mitigated by work not occurring during extremely dry conditions or using a water truck if necessary.

3. <u>WATER</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality, including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen, or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water-related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.)		X				
m. For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.)		X				

The proposed action would have no effect on water resources at the site.

4. <b><u>VEGETATION</u></b>  Will the proposed action result in?	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity, or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X		No	4a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		Yes	4b.
f. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:		X				

- 4a. Minimal vegetation will be removed that will be replaced with gravel during site development. Shrubs and trees may be planted to provide screening.
- 4b. There is the possibility for some new weed growth on disturbed and open soil areas of the site. We will manage weeds at the site by implementing the [FWP Statewide Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan](#).

5. <b><u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u></b> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?			X			5b.
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?			X			5c.
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest, or other human activity)?			X		Yes	5g.
h. For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f.)		X				
i. For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.)		X				

- 5b. Shrubs and trees planted for screening may provide additional cover for gray partridge and ring-necked pheasants.
- 5c. Shrubs and trees planted for screening may provide nesting habitat for a variety of songbirds.
- 5g. While there will be an increase in human use of the viewing area that could stress wildlife, the proposed site has been placed at a distance to minimize any disturbance to wildlife species and will incorporate a visual buffer between crops and the viewing platform.

## B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <b><u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u></b> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X		Yes	6a.
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				

- 6a. Construction equipment would cause a temporary, minor increase in noise levels at the project site during site development and during times of maintenance. Any increase in noise level at the site would be short-term and minor.

7. <u>LAND USE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?			X		No	7a
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use, the presence of which would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				7d

- 7a. The construction of the viewing area will remove less than 0.1-acre from the agricultural production on the WMA.

- 7d. The proposed project would have no effect on the land uses of nearby private properties.

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			X		Yes	8a
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a.)		X				

- 8a. Physical disturbance of the soil during construction could encourage the establishment of additional noxious weeds on the site. FWP would implement an integrated approach to control noxious weeds, as outlined in the [FWP Statewide Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan](#). The integrated plan uses a combination of biological, mechanical, and herbicidal treatments to control noxious weeds. The use of herbicides would comply with application guidelines to minimize the risk of chemical spills or water contamination and would be applied by people trained in safe handling techniques. There is also a minor risk of an oil spill and/or other substances during construction of the road and viewing area from construction equipment. The contractor will be required to follow best management practices to minimize this risk.

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?			X		X	9e.

9e. The speed limit on Highway 82 is 70 mph. Vehicles leaving the viewing area will have a clear view of traffic and should be able to enter and leave the viewing area safely. FWP will work with Flathead County and Montana Department of Transportation on sign placement on Highway 82 to the west and east of the viewing area to warn vehicles of the approaching viewing area.

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		X				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?		X				
e. Define projected revenue sources.		X				10e.
f. Define projected maintenance costs.		X				10f.

10e. No revenue sources are projected.

10f. Maintenance costs are expected to be minimal and low enough to be covered by existing WMA operation budgets.

11. <b><u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u></b>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		X				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report.)			X		Yes Positive	11c.
d. For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails, or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a & 11c.)		X				

- 11c. The proposed action may improve recreational use of the area by providing a designated viewing area (Tourism Report attached - Appendix B).

12. <b><u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u></b>  Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure, or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance?		X				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12a.)		X				

- 12a/d. In 2015, an additional cultural resource inventory was completed for the rest of the WMA. The cultural inventory concluded that disturbance of any part of this property posed a low likelihood of adverse impacts to cultural resources. Additional inventories are not required for the completion of this project.

## SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u>  Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT					
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard, or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.)		X				
g. For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		X				

The proposed action would have no significant effects on the site.

### **PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

During construction of the proposed project, there may be minor and temporary impacts to the physical environment, but the impacts would be short-term, and the improvements would benefit the community and recreational opportunities over the long term. The proposed action would have no negative cumulative effects on the biological, physical, or human environments. When considered over the long-term, the proposed action positively impacts the public's recreational use of the Flathead Valley.

The minor impacts that were identified in the previous section are small in scale and would not influence the overall environment of the immediate area. The natural environment would continue to provide habitat to transient and permanent wildlife species.

The proposed action would not impact the local wildlife species that frequent the property, and the project would be designed to minimize conditions that stress wildlife populations. The proposed project is unlikely to impact the one threatened species (grizzly bear) and the 19 other species of concern that have been observed in the vicinity of the project. Bald eagles are nesting in the area, but well outside of the ½ mile buffer recommended for projects of this type.

Soils disturbed during construction could recolonize with weeds. Disturbed areas would be reseeded with a native reclamation seed mix where necessary to reduce the establishment of weeds. FWP would continue implementing the [FWP Statewide Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan](#) using the appropriate chemical, biological, or mechanical method to control weeds on the property.

The proposed viewing area would improve recreational opportunities by providing safe and easily accessible wildlife viewing opportunities for the public.

### **PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

#### **1. Public involvement:**

The public will be notified in the following manners to comment on this draft EA, the proposed action, and the alternative:

- One public notices in each of the *Flathead Beacon*, *Daily Inter Lake*, and the *Helena Independent Record*.
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks' web page: <http://fwp.mt.gov>.
- Draft EAs will be available at the FWP Region 1 Headquarters in Kalispell and the FWP State Headquarters in Helena.
- A news release will be prepared and distributed to a standard list of media outlets interested in FWP Region 1 issues.
- Notice of this EA will be distributed to neighboring landowners and interested parties to ensure their knowledge of the proposed action.

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope, having limited impacts, many of which can be mitigated.

If requested within the comment period, FWP will schedule and conduct a public meeting on this proposed action.



**2. Duration of comment period:**

The public comment period will extend for 14 days. Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m., June 13, 2019, and can be e-mailed to Chris Hammond at [chammond@mt.gov](mailto:chammond@mt.gov) or mailed to the address below:

Chris Hammond  
West Valley Viewing Area Project  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
490 North Meridian Road  
Kalispell, MT 59901

**PART V. EA PREPARATION**

**1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? No.**

Based on an evaluation of impacts to the physical and human environment under MEPA, this environmental review revealed no significant negative impacts from the proposed action; therefore, an EIS is not necessary and an EA is the appropriate level of analysis. In determining the significance of the impacts, FWP assessed the severity, duration, geographic extent, and frequency of the impact, the probability that the impact would occur or reasonable assurance that the impact would not occur. FWP assessed the growth-inducing or growth-inhibiting aspects of the impact; the importance to the state and to society of the environmental resource or value affected; any precedent that would be set as a result of an impact of the proposed action that would commit FWP to future actions; and potential conflicts with local, federal, or state laws. As this EA revealed no significant impacts from the proposed actions, an EA is the appropriate level of review and an EIS is not required.

**2. Person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:**

Chris Hammond  
Wildlife Biologist, Region 1  
490 North Meridian Road  
Kalispell, MT 59901  
[chammond@mt.gov](mailto:chammond@mt.gov)  
(406) 751-4582

**3. List of agencies or offices consulted during preparation of the EA:**

Montana Department of Commerce – Tourism  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
    Design and Construction  
    Wildlife Division  
    Enforcement Division  
Montana Natural Heritage Program  
Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

**APPENDICES**

- A. MCA 23-1-110 Qualification Checklist
- B. Tourism Report – Department of Commerce

## APPENDIX A

### 23-1-110 MCA PROJECT QUALIFICATION CHECKLIST

**Date:** May 29, 2017

**Person Reviewing:** Chris Hammond

**Project Location:** The proposed North Shore WMA Wildlife Viewing Area is located south of Kalispell off of Montana Highway 82 on the north shore of Flathead Lake Road in Flathead County in Section 22, Township 29 North, Range 22 West (Figures 1 through 3).

**Description of Proposed Work:** Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposes to create a wildlife viewing area that meets the grade and dimensional standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act and provides the public with a safe area for wildlife viewing and outdoor education opportunities. The viewing area would provide access to incredible wildlife viewing opportunities, as well as, provide an outdoor classroom for the local schools.

The following checklist is intended to be a guide for determining whether a proposed action or improvement is of enough significance to fall under 23-1-110 rules. (Please check all that apply and comment as necessary.)

- [X] A. New roadway or trail built over undisturbed land?**  
Comments: Trail and elevated gravel platform will be placed on small portion of WMA farm land. Trail will be placed on existing farm access road.
- [ ] B. New building construction (buildings <100 sf and vault latrines exempt)?**  
Comments: No new construction.
- [X] C. Any excavation of 20 c.y. or greater?**  
Comments: Yes, for the viewing area and improvements to the access road.
- [X] D. New parking lots built over undisturbed land or expansion of existing lot that increases parking capacity by 25% or more?**  
Comments: There is an existing parking area that may need to be expanded slightly to allow for a bus turnaround.
- [ ] E. Any new shoreline alteration that exceeds a doublewide boat ramp or handicapped fishing station?**  
Comments: No.
- [ ] F. Any new construction into lakes, reservoirs, or streams?**  
Comments: No
- [ ] G. Any new construction in an area with National Registry quality cultural artifacts (as determined by State Historical Preservation Office)?**  
Comments: No.
- [ ] H. Any new above ground utility lines?**  
Comments: No.
- [ ] I. Any increase or decrease in campsites of 25% or more of an existing number of campsites?**  
Comments: No campsites would be constructed.
- [ ] J. Proposed project significantly changes the existing features or use pattern, including effects of a series of individual projects?**  
Comments: No.

## APPENDIX B TOURISM REPORT

### MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA) & MCA 23-1-110

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has initiated the review process as mandated by MCA 23-1-110 and the Montana Environmental Policy Act in its consideration of the project described below. As part of the review process, input and comments are being solicited. Please complete the project name and project description portions and submit this form to:

Jan Stoddard, Bureau Chief, Industry Services and Outreach  
Montana Office of Tourism & Business Development  
301 S. Park Ave, Helena, MT 59601

**Project Name:** North Shore Wildlife Management Area Proposed Wildlife Viewing Area

**Project Description:** The north shore area of Flathead Lake southeast of Kalispell is the lake's longest stretch of undeveloped shore line and part of the Audubon-designated Flathead Lake Important Bird Area (IBA). The IBA supports over 229 bird species, including 172 species that are common or seasonally abundant, and hosts tens of thousands of migrating waterfowl that rest and feed in the waters off Flathead Lake's north shore and within adjacent farm fields that flood during springtime. The area provides year-round wildlife-related recreational opportunities such as wildlife watching and photography; however there are currently no designated areas for wildlife viewing. FWP proposes to create a wildlife viewing area that meets the grade and dimensional standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act and provides the public with a safe area for wildlife viewing and outdoor education opportunities.

1. Would this site development project have an impact on the tourism economy?

NO

**YES**

If YES, briefly describe:

Yes, as described, the project has the potential to positively impact the tourism and recreation industry economy if properly maintained. According to the Institute for Tourism & Recreational Research at the University of Montana, 5% of all non-resident visitors in 2018, representing a total of 619,487 people, listed birding as a primary activity during their trip to Montana. Creation of a wildlife viewing area, accessible year-round for all types of visitors, would provide new opportunities for birding, wildlife viewing, and related education.

2. Does this impending improvement alter the quality or quantity of recreation/tourism opportunities and settings?

NO

**YES**

If YES, briefly describe:

Yes, as described, the project has the potential to improve quality and quantity of tourism and recreational opportunities, especially for non-resident visitors with accessibility limitations. We are assuming the agency has determined it has necessary funding for the on-going operations and maintenance once this project is complete.

Signature Jan Stoddard

Date: 4/29/19

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